



THE HEALTH HUB

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WELCOME NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Assalamalaikum w.w.b.

It gives me great pleasure in inviting you back in the New Year, having had a beautiful month of Ramadhan with family, the recent AGM and Eid lunch with community which sealed the deal as we start the second quarter of the year. What a way to to enrich your knowledge and welcome to our 5th edition of the quarterly KMA Health Hub.

We thank Allah [SWT] for giving us great health, for the rains that replenish the greenery in Kenya, and for family. As we kick off the year, let us remember to be vigilant with the heavy rains and floods that can pose a danger to those traversing back home. Let's ensure hygiene always and seeking health care earlier than later. We once again look forward to interacting with you throughout the year.

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COMMUNITY & HEALTH

A season of gratitude, renewal, and community health. As we step into a new quarter, the KMA Medical Subcommittee remains committed to delivering quality health education and community screening initiatives.

A NOTE OF CAUTION

- Be vigilant with heavy rains and seasonal floods
- Ensure hygiene always, especially during wet seasons
- Seek health care earlier rather than later
- Keep emergency contacts readily accessible



Dr. Imran B Khares
Consultant Pediatrician
Senior editor, The Health Hub
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Oral Tumors

Oral tumors are abnormal growths that occur within the oral cavity, including the lips, tongue, cheeks, floor of the mouth, palate, and gums. These tumors can be benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous), with the latter posing significant health risks if not detected early.



Types of Oral Tumors

BENIGN TUMORS

Slow-growing, less aggressive. Common examples:

- Fibroma - chronic irritation
- Papilloma - HPV related
- Lipoma - fatty tissue
- Hemangioma - vascular origin

May require removal if function is affected.



MALIGNANT TUMORS

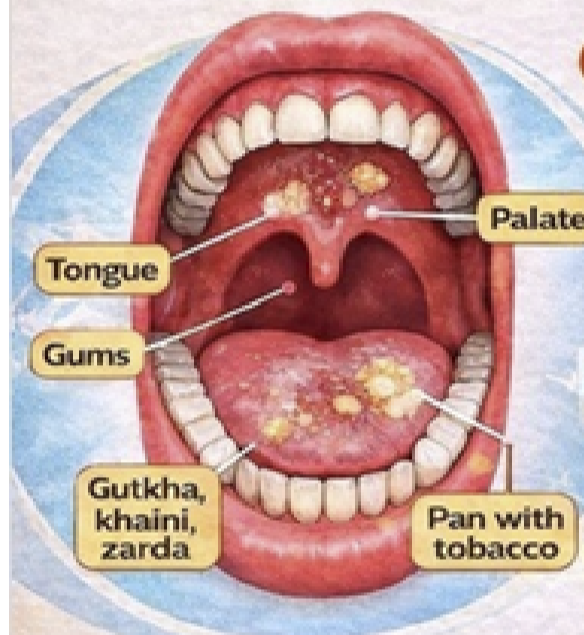
Most common: oral squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC).

- Verrucous carcinoma
- Salivary gland malignancies
- Lymphomas

Invasive - can metastasize if untreated.

Risk Factors for Oral Cancer (Mouth Cancer)

Oral cancer commonly affects the tongue, gums, inner cheeks, floor of mouth, lips, and palate. Knowing the risk factors helps in early prevention and diagnosis.



Tobacco Use (Most Important)

- Smoking (cigarettes, bidis)
- Chewing tobacco
- Gutkha, khaini, zarda
- Pan with tobacco

Increases risk **5-10 times**

Alcohol Consumption

- Heavy or regular alcohol intake
- Alcohol + tobacco together = **very high risk**

Sun Exposure

- Prolonged sun exposure - **Lip cancer**
- Common in outdoor workers

Poor Oral Hygiene

- Sharp or broken teeth
- Ill-fitting dentures
- Chronic irritation of oral mucosa

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)

- Especially HPV-16
- Associated with tongue and oropharyngeal cancers

Warning Signs (Don't ignore)

- ✔ Non-healing mouth ulcer (-2 weeks)
- ✔ White or red patch
- ✔ Difficulty in swallowing
- ✔ Change in voice
- ✔ Mouth pain or bleeding
- ✔ Neck swelling

Prevention Tips

- ✔ Stop tobacco & alcohol
- ✔ Maintain good oral hygiene
- ✔ Regular dental & ENT check-ups
- ✔ Eat fruits & green vegetables
- ✔ Early consultation saves life

Clinical Features

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION
Ulcers	Non-healing sores lasting >2 weeks
White/Red Patches	Leukoplakia or erythroplakia
Lumps / Swelling	Unexplained masses in mouth or neck
Difficulty Swallowing	Pain or difficulty when eating/drinking
Numbness	Loss of sensation in lips, tongue, gums
Voice Changes	Hoarseness or altered speech

Diagnosis

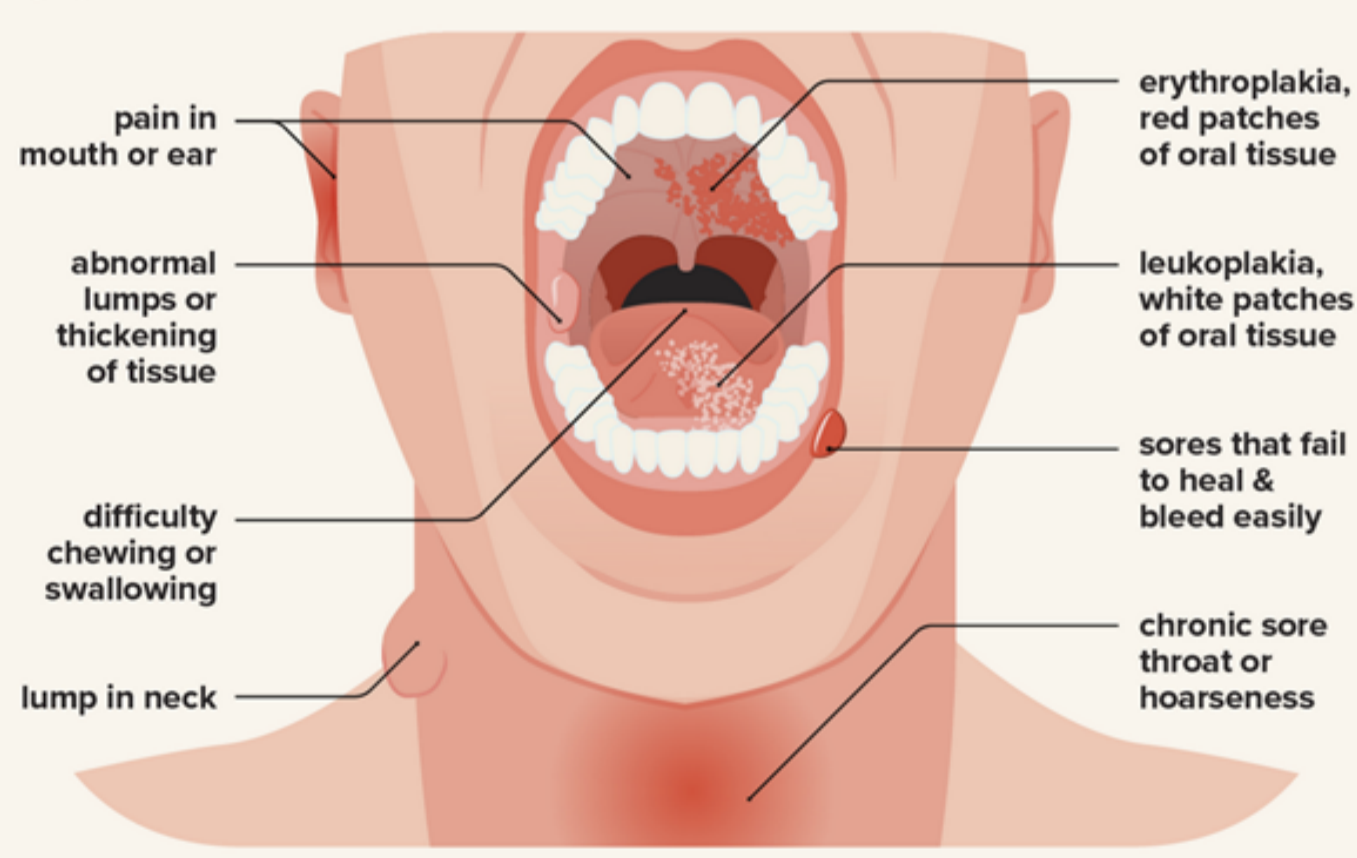
HOW WE DIAGNOSE

- Clinical examination – visual inspection by a dental professional
- Biopsy – the gold standard for definitive diagnosis
- Imaging – X-rays, CT scans, or MRI for advanced staging

⚠ Early detection significantly improves prognosis.

Oral cancer self-exams

Symptoms to look for



Management

BENIGN

- Surgical removal
- Monitoring if small
- Follow-up exams

MALIGNANT

- Surgery
- Radiotherapy
- Chemotherapy
- Multidisciplinary care

Prevention

- ✔ Avoid tobacco, mawa, kuber, vaping and alcohol
- ✔ Maintain excellent oral hygiene daily
- ✔ Attend regular dental check-ups
- ✔ Eat a balanced diet rich in antioxidants
- ✔ Practice safe oral behaviours

⚠ Know Your Risk Factors

Tobacco use (including smokeless forms like mawa/kuber), alcohol, HPV infection, chronic sun exposure on the lips, and poor oral hygiene are leading contributors to oral cancer risk.

Conclusion

Oral tumors represent a significant health concern, particularly malignant forms such as oral squamous cell carcinoma. Awareness, early detection, and timely management are key to improving outcomes and reducing morbidity and mortality.



Dr. Tahsin Fatima
Dental Surgeon

A Sudden Stoney Surprise

A personal journey through the wards of a Newborn unit, the chaos of long hospital days, and the unexpected lesson that arrived in the form of a kidney stone, and what we can all learn from it.



The Story Behind the Stone

During my rotations in the Newborn unit over a 3-month period during my Pediatric Specialization, I distinctly recall how we would start pre-rounding on the numerous babies as early as **5:45am**, catching a glimpse of the rising sun as we entered the hot, humid neonatal ward.

By 6pm, having run tests, rounded with senior consultants, completed orders, and dealt with emergencies, I would finally leave having fulfilled my professional duties. I would follow that with a treat of **cold, bitter lemon soda** as I waddled through the traffic back home.

This ritual went on until one day when I woke up with a sudden sharp back pain which didn't disappear with pain medication. A hospital visit and a CT scan later, I was told: **"You have a kidney stone."**

How could something so small cause one such grief? Let's go through what a kidney stone is, and how we can maneuver avoiding it.

So, What Are Kidney Stones?

Urine contains many dissolved minerals and salts. When their levels increase, they can **saturate and crystallize**, forming hard deposits ranging from tiny grains to rocks that fill the inner hollow structures of the kidney.

Kidney stones may start small and appear harmless at first. However, as they grow larger, they attract painful nerve signals that can present as a **constant dull backache**, or something far more acute.

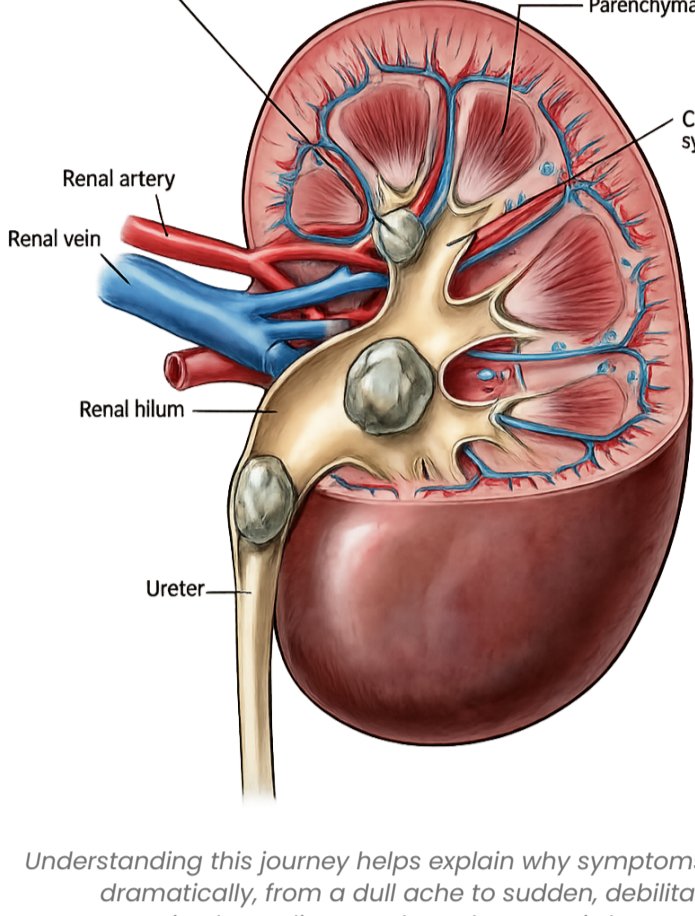
Stones can also travel down the **ureter** (then called a ureteral stone). As it reaches the bladder, it may be passed out through urine. But if the stone becomes stuck in the ureter, it blocks urine flow from that kidney, resulting in **sudden, severe pain** that does not fully resolve even with pain relief medications.

Key Terms

- **Kidney Stone** — crystallized mineral deposit in the kidney
- **Ureteral Stone** — a stone that has traveled into the ureter

- **Ureter** — the tube connecting kidney to bladder

- **Saturation** — the point at which minerals begin to crystallize in urine



Understanding this journey helps explain why symptoms can shift dramatically, from a dull ache to sudden, debilitating pain, depending on where the stone is located.

Prevalence of Kidney Stone Disease in Kenya

Due to changes in dietary habits and climate within our region, there has been a significant rise in prevalence within Kenya, especially highly reported in Nairobi and Coastal regions.

79%

Male Patients

The vast majority of kidney stone cases in Kenya affect men, confirmed by Aga Khan University Hospital data.

15K

Hospitalizations/Year

Approximately 15,000 Kenyans are hospitalized annually due to kidney stone disease.

35%

Rise 2020–2024

Cases increased in major private hospitals by over 35% between 2020 and 2024.

91%

Flank Pain

91% of patients at Aga Khan University Hospital presented with flank pain as their primary symptom.

Key Drivers of This Rise



Dehydration

Hot weather and insufficient fluid intake concentrate urine minerals.



Diet

High protein, low fiber diets elevate stone-forming substances in urine.



Sedentary Lifestyle

Physical inactivity contributes to metabolic imbalances that promote stone formation.



Genetic Factors

Family history plays a meaningful role in individual susceptibility to kidney stones.

Symptoms of Kidney Stones

Kidney stones can produce a wide range of symptoms depending on their size and location. Recognizing these signs early is critical for timely treatment.

Pain

On-and-off cramping pain in the back and side, sometimes moving to the lower abdomen or groin. It can begin suddenly, may be continuous, and waxes and wanes as the body tries to eliminate the stone. Men may also feel pain at the tip of the penis.

Frequent Urination

A persistent sensation to pass urine frequently, even when little urine is produced, is a hallmark symptom of a stone near the bladder.

Burning Sensation

A burning or stinging sensation during urination, often mistaken for a urinary tract infection.

Discolored Urine

Urine may appear darker than usual or take on a red or pink hue due to traces of blood, a condition called hematuria.

Nausea and Vomiting

The intense pain signals from a kidney stone can trigger nausea and vomiting, further complicating the patient's condition.

△ Note

If you experience sudden, severe flank pain alongside nausea and blood in your urine, seek medical attention immediately. Do not wait for symptoms to resolve on their own.

KIDNEY STONE DIET CHART

Goal: Prevent formation by reducing oxalate, sodium, and animal protein intake — and maintaining good hydration

DO's

- ✓ **Stay Hydrated**
 - Drink 2.5–2 liters of water daily (unless restricted by your doctor).
 - Include lemon water or citrus fruits
- ✓ **Eat Calcium-Rich Foods (from natural sources)**
 - Low-fat milk, curd, paneer — in moderation
 - Ragi, sesame seeds, broccoli, kale — good non-dairy calcium sources
- ✓ **Choose Low-Oxalate Foods**
 - Cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, pumpkin, peas, papaya, banana, melon, apples
 - White rice, wheat, oats, lentils, and pulses (in moderation)
- ✓ **Include Citrate-Rich Foods**
 - Lemon, orange, sweet lime, amia
 - Natural citrate helps prevent calcium stone formation
- ✓ **Limit Salt Intake**
 - Use less than 1 teaspoon salt/day
 - Avoid packed, canned, or processed foods high in sodium

DON'Ts

- ✗ **High-Oxalate Foods**
 - Spinach, beetroot nuts, chocolate, tea, coffee
- ✗ **Animal Protein**
 - Limit red meat, poultry, and seafood once a week
- ✗ **Excessive Salt**
 - Add too much salt at table or use high sodium foods
- ✗ **Sugary Foods**
 - Sugar-sweetened beverages, sweets
- ✗ **Too Much Calcium**
 - Calcium supplements and fortified foods
- ✗ **Vitamin C Supplements**
 - Not exceed recommended dosage of vitamin C

Why Water Matters

The Science of Hydration

Water is the single most important tool in flushing toxins from the body and **diluting substances** like calcium, oxalate, and uric acid that lead to stone formation. Without enough fluids, or when replaced by carbonated soft drinks, urine becomes concentrated, creating an environment where crystals form and harden.

Consistent hydration ensures lighter urine and reduces the chance of deposits turning into stones. Simply put: **drinking water is a key part of any effective kidney stone prevention method.**

① Doctors generally recommend adults consume 2.5 to 3 liters of water daily. People in hot climates or with active lifestyles may need even more.

Check Your Urine Color

A practical and immediate guide to your hydration status:

Clear or Light Yellow

Good hydration — you are well protected against stone formation.

Dark Yellow

Dehydration — higher stone risk. Increase your water intake immediately.

By following this simple rule, you support overall health and contribute directly to your kidney stone prevention strategy.

Tips for Healthy Hydration & Lifestyle

Prevention is always better than cure. These practical habits can dramatically reduce your risk of developing kidney stones.



Start the Day with Water

A morning glass of water jumpstarts kidney function and sets a healthy tone for the day.



Spread Intake Throughout the Day

Frequent sips are better than drinking large amounts all at once, consistency is key.



Infuse with Lemon

Adding lemon provides citrate, a compound known to actively help prevent kidney stone formation.



Avoid Sugary and Fizzy Drinks

These beverages increase stone risk and undermine hydration.



Eat Water-Rich Foods

Watermelon, oranges, cucumbers, and lettuce are excellent choices to support hydration through diet.

Lifestyle Dietary Habits

→ Cut Down on Salt

Too much sodium raises calcium levels in urine, a major factor in stone formation.

→ Limit Animal Protein

Red meat and seafood can elevate uric acid, contributing to stone buildup over time.

→ Balance Calcium Intake

Both low and excessive calcium can encourage stones. A moderate, food-based intake is best.

Treatment of Kidney Stones

Treatment depends on the **type of stone**, its **location**, **severity**, and **how long symptoms have been present**. It is of great value to talk to your health care provider about what is best for you.

1. NATURAL PASSAGE

Many stones pass without treatment. Managed with pain relief and hydration.

2. MEDICAL INTERVENTION

Medications to relax ureter muscles and help stone pass. Pain management.

3. SURGICAL REMOVAL

Needed when stone fails to pass, pain is unmanageable, or causes blockage.

When Surgery May Be Needed

- The stone fails to pass on its own
- The pain is too great to wait for natural passage
- The stone is affecting kidney function
- There is a prolonged blockage of urine flow

Always Consult Your Doctor

There are different treatment choices available. The right approach depends on your individual case, medical history, and the specific characteristics of your stone. Never self-medicate for kidney stone pain without professional guidance.

A Final Word

Kidney stones are a growing health concern in Kenya and across the region, but they are largely **preventable**. The steps are simple: stay hydrated, eat wisely, move your body, and listen to the signals it sends you.



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